

**COMPLIMENTS AND ITS RESPONSES USED BY THE USERS OF INSTAGRAM**



**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for Getting Bachelor Degree of  
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I truthfully testify that the research paper entitled "*Compliments and Its Responses Used by the Users of Instagram*" is really work of mine and has satisfied the rules and regulations of Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta with respect to plagiarism. I certify that all quotations and information sources have been fully mentioned and written in bibliography. Last, I also confirm that this research paper has not been submitted for getting award in any tertiary institutions. If it is proved that there is any plagiarism in this publication article, I will be fully responsible.

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The researcher,



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# **COMPLIMENTS AND ITS RESPONSES USED BY THE USERS OF INSTAGRAM**

## **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini difokuskan pada kalimat-kalimat pujian berbahasa Inggris yang digunakan oleh para pengguna instagram. Tujuan dari studi ini adalah untuk (1) mengidentifikasi topik-topik dalam kalimat pujian, (2) mendeskripsikan fungsi dari setiap kalimat pujian, dan (3) mengklasifikasi tipe-tipe respon pujian yang digunakan oleh para pengguna instagram. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah deskriptif kualitatif, karena topik dan fungsi kalimat pujian, serta tipe respon yang digunakan oleh pengguna instagram dinyatakan berdasarkan konteks dan kualitas pemahaman peneliti. Ada 40 kalimat pujian berbahasa Inggris beserta responnya yang menjadi data dalam penelitian ini. Data tersebut diambil secara acak dari unggahan para pengguna instagram tahun 2017. Data dianalisis menggunakan teori dari Wu (2008) dan Herbert (1990). Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa (1) ada 7 topik pujian yang digunakan oleh pengguna instagram, yaitu topik penampilan, kepemilikan, prestasi / kemampuan / keterampilan, kepribadian, dan topik lain, meliputi topik makanan/minuman, tempat, dan gambar. Topik yang paling sering muncul adalah penampilan (7,). Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa pengamat sering memberikan pujian pada hal-hal yang dapat dilihat atau tampilan luar dari orang yang diberikan pujian, (2) ada 4 fungsi pujian yang digunakan oleh pengguna instagram, yaitu untuk mengekspresikan kekaguman, untuk memperhalus ucapan syukur dan selamat, untuk memulai percakapan, dan untuk memperkuat keinginan. Fungsi pujian yang paling dominan adalah untuk mengekspresikan kekaguman (70). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa sebagian besar pengguna instagram mengutarakan pujiannya untuk mengekspresikan kekaguman terhadap sesuatu yang dipujinya. (3) ada 8 tipe respon pujian yang digunakan oleh pengguna instagram seperti appreciation token, comment acceptance, comment history, return, praise upgrade, scale down, questioning, and no acknowledgement. Tipe respon yang paling banyak digunakan adalah comment acceptance (2,). Hasil menunjukkan bahwa pengguna instagram sering menerima pujian yang diberikan dan memberikan komentar yang relevan terhadap pujian yang diberikan sebelumnya.

Kata Kunci: Pragmatik, Pujian, Respon, Instagram

## **ABSTRACT**

This research is focused on English compliment and its responses used by the users of instagram. The aims of this study are (1) to identify the topics of compliment, (2) to describe the functions of compliment, and (3) to classify the types of compliment responses that are used by the users of instagram. The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative, because the topics and functions of compliment, and also the types of response are revealed based on its context and researcher's comprehensive quality. There are 40 selected English compliments and its responses as data of this research. Those are randomly taken from the posts of instagram users in 2017. The data are analyzed by using the theory of Wu (2008) and Herbert (1990). The result of this research shows that (1) there are 7 topics of compliment used by the users of instagram, i.e. appearance, possession, performance/ability/skill, personality trait and 3 other topics such as food/drink, place, and picture. The topic that is commonly used is appearance (37,5). It indicates that the addresser often praises the visible thing or external packaging of the addressee. (2) there are 4 functions of compliment, such as to express admiration, to replace gratitude/congratulation, to open conversation, and to reinforce desired

behavior. Function that is frequently used is to express admiration (70%). It shows that the users of instagram mostly use the compliment to express their admiration of something that is being complimented. (3) there are 8 types of compliment response used by the users of instagram, such as appreciation token, comment acceptance, comment history, return, praise upgrade, scale down, questioning, and no acknowledgement. The dominant type of response used is comment acceptance (32,5%). The result indicates that the users of instagram often accepts the complimentary force and gives relevant comment or feedback related to the compliment given.

Keywords: Pragmatics, Compliment, Response, Instagram

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Language is utilized to express one's feelings, thoughts, and ideas in spoken or written form. Someone cannot live without language for communicating with each other. In the process of communication, the speakers (or writers) produce utterances in order to get a change or effect from the listener as the result of what they have uttered. But not all the listeners (or readers) can easily understand the purpose or intention of the utterances produced by the speakers (or writers). They have to learn about speaker's intention in producing utterances or sentence itself. Hence, pragmatics is needed to study what speaker means or 'speaker meaning'.

Pragmatics concentrates on the intended meaning or the goal of speakers' utterance. Yule (1996, p. 4) stated that "pragmatics is the study of the relation between linguistics forms and the users of the forms". It is the study that allows human, as the users of the form, into the analysis. Yule (1996) also explains some language aspects that are studied or investigated in pragmatics such as deixis and distance, presupposition and entailment, reference and inference, implicature, politeness, and speech act.

Compliment is one of the classification of expressive utterance in speech act. It is an interesting topic to be analyzed because it happens almost every day in daily life. Compliments also have become important topics as an object of research made by linguists. According to Hebert (1989) compliment is used to negotiate solidarity with an addressee in order to make people feel good. Besides, Holmes (1988, 446) stated that compliment is a speech act that can make a closer relation with others as what he has defined that compliments as:

"A speech act which explicitly or implicitly attributes credit to someone other than the speakers, usually the person addressed, for some "good" (possession, characteristic, skill, etc.) which is positively valued by the speaker and the hearer" (Holmes, 1988, p. 446).

According to Herbert (1998), as cited in Wu (2008, p. 28), “compliments are classified into four classifications”, those are: Compliment on Appearances, Compliment on Performances or Skills or Abilities, Compliment on Possessions, and Compliment on Personality. First, Compliment on Appearance is given to admire someone’s appearance. It is usually about the appearance of the addressee, such as the clothes, hair, body, etc. For example, “*Your shirt looks beautiful!*”. Second, Compliment on Performances or Skills or Abilities is a compliment given to the addressee as the quality of something produced through his/her skills or effort in getting an achievement. For example, “*That’s great cheese cake you made*”. Third, Compliment on Possessions is a compliment given for someone’s possessions. For example, “*I really like your new sofa*”. Last, Compliment on Personality is a compliment produced for someone’s internal trait or emotion. For example, “*O, she is a strong girl*”.

When compliment is uttered, there must be a reply as the responses to the compliments itself. Generally, the addressee will accept the compliment. But in practice, compliment is not always accepted. According to Pomerantz (1978) the reason is because there are two rules which govern the principle of compliments responses that make the addressee stays in the difficult position. The former is agree with the speaker, and the later is avoid self-praise.

Herbert (1990) conducted further study about compliment responses. There are three basic categories of the compliment responses, such as (1) agreement, (2) non-agreement, and (3) request of interpretation. The first category consists of acceptance and non-acceptance. Further, acceptance is subcategorized into appreciation token, comment acceptance, and praise upgrade. Whereas non-acceptance is divided into comment history, reassignment, and return. The second category, non-agreement, comprised of scale down, question, disagreement, qualification, disagreement, and no-acknowledgement. The last category, request interpretation, can be include a request.

In this modern era, the latest communication trend used to connect the people is social media. Neti (2011) stated that “social media simply refers to communication/publication platforms which are generated and sustained by the interpersonal interaction of individuals through the specific medium or tool.” The medium or tool means websites or applications that enable to share contents whether informations, advertisements, moments, career interests, and others in social networking.

Nowadays, instagram has become a popular social media that is used by the people wherever they are. It is because instagram is a simple photo-sharing application that can be used to share any moments in the form of video or photo either publicly or privately. The viewers that allowed to see someone’s account will be able give the comment on the post

automatically. What are commented by the viewers may be varied. One of them is compliment. The addressee, who is being complimented, has chances to respond the compliments gave by the addresser (viewer) by replying the comment given. There are many topics, types, and functions of compliments and its responses used by the user of instagram. In order to make a clear understanding, the sample is as below:

**Picture 1**

Sunshine (@sunshinebiskaps) : You look beautiful! May you have many decades of happiness and love.

Nia (@nia21achdiat) : Thank you so much sunshine ☺

The utterances above are kinds of compliment and its response. It happened when she (Sunshine) saw the picture of Nia's engagement day. At that day, Nia wore *kebaya* and completed by a great touch of make-up-artist in her face. Sunshine, as the addresser, say to Nia "*You look beautiful...*". It seems like Sunshine wants to give compliment to Nia. Based on Herbert (1998) the topic compliment given by the addresser is a Compliment on Appearance. Besides, the utterance of compliment mentioned before has function to express admiration especially for someone's appearance (Wu, 2008). It also shows that her compliment is accepted because Nia gives feedback by saying "*Thank you so much sunshine*". If we relate this sample of response to Herbert's type of compliment response, it includes as a type of appreciation token.

From the explanation above, the present study is to know whether the type and function of the compliments and its responses used by instagram users based on pragmatics view. The researcher carries out the research entitled "*Compliments and Its Responses Used by the Users of Instagram*".

## **2. RESEARCH METHOD**

This research is a qualitative research in which the purposes are to identify, describe, and classify the topic, function, and type of compliments and its response used by the users of instagram. Data of this research are the utterances containing English compliments and its responses found in the data source. While the data sources are photos and videos that contain utterances of English compliments and its responses uploaded in instagram in 2017. The data are analyzed by using the theory of Wu (2008) and Herbert (1990).



### 3. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 The Topics of Compliment

As far as the topic of compliment is concerned, all the forty data containing English compliments have been divided into four topics of compliment based on Herbert (1998): appearance, possession, performance/skill/ability, and personality traits. During the analysis, the researcher finds compliments which do not belong to the four categories of topics of compliment based on Herbert (1998). They are compliment on food/drink, place, and picture. For those ones which do not belong the 4 categories above, the researcher classifies them into others. Table 2 below shows the concrete number of each topic.

Table 2. Topics of Compliment Used by the Users of Instagram

No	Topics of Compliment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Appearance	15	37,5%
2	Possession	8	20%
3	Performance/ability/skill	3	7,5%
4	Personality Trait	3	7,5%
5	Others	11	27,5
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table above shows the result and percentage of data analysis related to topics of compliment. Forty data have been divided into the topics of compliment on: appearance, possession, performance/ability/skill, personality trait, and others which do not belong to the four. The highest frequency is compliment on appearance with the percentage 37,5% out of the total data. There are 11 data on other topics, with percentage 27,5%. It consist 3 data on food/drink, 3 data on place, and 4 data on picture. The third is compliment on possession with 8 data (20%). It is followed by the last two topics of compliment: performance/ability/skill and personality trait. Both have 3 data, each of them has 7,5%. In conclusion, topic of compliment on appearance is the most often used by the users of instagram.

#### 3.2 Functions of Compliment

According to Wu (2008), there are six functions of compliment as collected by some experts. Based on the data analysis, there are only four of six functions used by the users of instagram. The calculation will be shown in table 3 below.

Table 3. Functions of Compliment Used by the Users of Instagram

No	Functions of Compliment	Frequency	Percentage
1	Express admiration	28	70%
2	Establish/confirm/solidarity	0	0%
3	Replace greetings/gratitude/apologize/congratulation	4	10%
4	Soften FTA	0	0%
5	Open/sustain conversation	2	5%
6	Reinforce desired behavior	6	15%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 3 above shows result and percentage of the functions of compliment. To begin, kind of function to express admiration has the highest frequency of all, with percentage 70%. The second is the function of compliment to reinforce desired behavior, with 15% or 6 out of the total of data. The third position is to replace greeting/gratitude/congratulation, with 4 of 40 data (10%). Whereas the lowest frequency is the function to open conversation (conversation strategy) with 5% of all. In this research, the researcher only finds 4 of six functions of compliment. The two other functions: to maintain solidarity and to soften FTA are not exist in the data.

### 3.3 The Types of Compliment Responses

Herbert (1990) classified compliment responses into three basic categories. During the analysis, 40 data containing responses of English compliment have been categorized into the twelfth types of compliment responses. Table 4 below shows the number of each type.

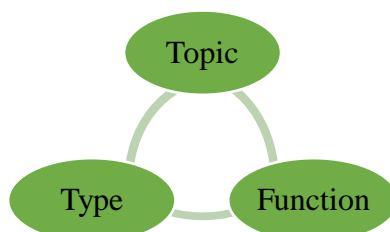
Table 4. Types of Compliment Response Used by the Users of Instagram

No	Types of Response	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Appreciation Token	11	27,5%
2.	Comment Acceptance	13	32,5%
3.	Comment History	2	5%
4.	Reassignment	0	0%
5.	Return	8	20%
6.	Praise Upgrade	2	5%
7.	Scale Down	2	5%
8.	Questioning	1	2,5%

9.	Disagreement	0	0%
10.	Qualification	0	0%
11.	Request Interpretation	0	0%
12.	No Acknowledgement	1	2,5%
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>40</b>	<b>100%</b>

The table shows the result and percentage of data analysis related to types of compliment responses. Forty data have been analyzed and categorized into the types of compliment response. The type that has the highest frequency is Comment Acceptance with 13 of 40 data (32,5%); Appreciation Token 10 data (27,5%); Return 8 of 40 (20%); the next are Comment History, Praise Upgrade, and Scale Sown which have same frequency. Each of them has 2 of 40 data (5%); and the lowest are both Questioning and No Acknowledgement. Each of them has 1 out of 40 data (2,5%). Based on the result of analysis, there are no types of response in Reassignment, Qualification, Disagreement, and Request Interpretation used by the users of instagram.

Related to the findings of this research, there is the relation between the topic, function, and type of responses used by the users of instagram. The illustration is drawn in the chart below:



The topic of compliment related to the function of compliment itself. The most frequent topic found in this research is appearance, while the dominant function found is to express admiration. Compliment on appearance and admiration has a strong relationship. Appearance relates to something that is visible, hence the addressers of the compliment mostly give praise to the visible things by expressing admiration. Moreover, function of compliment also has relation with the type of response used by the addressee. In this research, the dominant type of response used by the users of instagram is comment acceptance which means that the addressee accepts the compliment. When there is an admiration from someone, the addressee usually accepts the admiration.

This present research is different with the results of the two previous researches as mentioned above. The first research conducted by Tiono and Nova only discussed about type of compliment and its responses without analyzing the functions of compliment. While the research from Placencia, Lower, and Powell only discussed about the response of compliment. Hence, this present research is one step more beneficial because it is completed by the analysis of functions of compliment itself. By knowing the functions of compliment, the researcher is able to know the intention of someone in uttering the compliments.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

By employing the theory of Herbert about topics of compliment, the researcher can answer the first problem statement. Based on the data analysis and finding, the researcher found that there are some topics used by the users of instagram that do not belong to the four topics of compliment from Herbert as the writer stated in the theory. The four topics of compliment from Herbert's theory are compliment on appearance, possession, performance/ability/skill, and personality trait. While the additional topics found are compliment on picture, food/drink, and place. These three additional topics are classified by the researcher into others.

By using pragmatics theory especially about context by Leech (1983), the researcher can describe the function of compliments uttered by the users of instagram in order to answer the second problem statement. Wu (2008) mentions that there are six functions of compliment as explained by the expert in the previous researches. In this analysis, the researcher found only four of six functions that are used by the users of instagram. Those are to express admiration, to replace gratitude/congratulation, to open conversation, and to reinforce desired behavior. Relating to this functions of compliment, the most dominantly used by the users of instagram is function to express admiration. While the less one is function to open conversation or conversation strategy.

By following the theory of types of compliment responses from Herbert (1990), the researcher can answer the third problem statement. Based on the analysis of 40 compliment responses uttered by the users of instagram, the researcher found that there are 8 of 12 types of responses. Those are Appreciation Token, Comment Acceptance, Comment History, Praise Upgrade, Return, Scale Down, Questioning, and No acknowledgement. Other four types of responses such as Reassignment, Disagreement, Qualification, and Request Interpretation are not found in this present analysis.

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